

Tools to Connect Schools to Local Food

Boulder, United StatesNational, United States



Chef Ann Cooper







Year Founded:
2009

Organization type:

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Project Stage:

Established

Budget:

\$1 million - \$5 million

Website:

<http://www.foodfamilyfarming.org/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/ChefAnnFnd>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/chefannfoundation>

SHARE

- [Food](#)
- [Food security](#)
- [Youth development](#)
- [Sustainable agriculture](#)

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Every child should have access to fresh, nutritious, and delicious food at school to support healthy eating habits AND healthy, nutrient-rich food systems. The Food Family Farming Foundation (F3) wants to provide tools and resources to help schools nourish children with local, fresh food.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

For the first time in two centuries, children have shorter life expectancies than their parents, due primarily to diet-related diseases like obesity and diabetes. Research shows that current school food programs are CONTRIBUTING to our childhood obesity epidemic. Currently, schools depend on nutrient-poor, pre-packaged, ready-to-heat food to feed students. School districts are working to change their school nutrition programs, but they need help.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

School districts are major institutional buyers of food in their communities. If we can shift their procurement practices to focus on local and regional food, we can support and expand local, nutrient-rich food production AND provide healthier, fresh, whole foods to children. Our "Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools" ensures that all schoolchildren have access to fresh fruits and vegetables every day at school. The Lunch Box, F3's online toolkit, provides schools with free tools and resources to transition to scratch-cooking and whole, fresh, nutrient-rich foods. We are working to expand our procurement tools to focus on supporting local food systems and supplying salad bars with local, fresh food.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

The Houston Independent School District received salad bars from Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools. They said: "We targeted schools in areas considered low-income or 'food deserts.' We were initially concerned that we would have to persuade kids to take fresh fruits and vegetables from the bar, but we've actually had to do the opposite. When we saw a girl walking away with 1 1/2 pints of cherry tomatoes, we had to assure her that the salad bar was here to stay." Tim Cipriano, Director of Food Services for Guilford Public Schools, said: "The Lunch Box has been a strong partner in our campaign to serve children real food. We utilize the Lunch Box for training materials and resources instead of trying to reinvent the

wheel."

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

The Numbers 49: Number of states with Let's Move salad bars 2,587: Number of schools with Let's Move salad bars 1,293,500: Number of children with daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables in schools 179,318: Number of visitors to The Lunch Box in the past year Current Lunch Box resources help schools with: o building connections between their salad bar programs and local farmer's markets; o using more local produce in their salad bar and overall school meal programs; o how to incorporate school garden harvests into salad bars; o examples of successful farm-to-school programs; o freezing local harvests for year-round produce; and o guides for regional food hubs. With our partners Whole Kids Foundation, United Fresh Foundation, and the National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance, F3 is committed to providing a total of 6,000 schools with salad bar equipment. Our Tools to Connect Local Schools program will help schools fill their salad bars with local, nutrient-rich food.

Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution's plan to ensure financial sustainability?

F3 is sustained through grants from foundations, corporate sponsorships, and donations from individuals. We've established diverse funding streams to ensure a stable financial foundation, and we're currently developing income generating projects - like a low-cost school menu app and consulting services - that will lessen our dependency on external funders and will let us to continue offering resources, tools, and equipment to schools for free.

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

The many players in school food are all working toward the same goal - ensuring that ALL children have access to safe, nutrient-rich food in school. We work together to make sure we aren't duplicating efforts. For example, the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation focuses on nutrition education and cooking classes. School Food FOCUS identifies best procurement practices in districts. The National Farm-to-School Network provides networking and advocacy, and FoodCorps recruits garden volunteers. F3 works WITH other organizations to pair our tools, resources, outreach and knowledge with theirs. Other potential partners include urban farmers (like RVA farms) and local supply chains (like Nashville Grown) that we can pair up with participating schools in their communities.

Team

Founding Story

Before Chef Ann Cooper became a lunch lady, she spent years as a high-end chef for businesses like the renowned Putney Inn in Vermont. Children weren't her concern, nor were healthy food systems. In the late 90s, she began to learn about food sources and wrote Bitter Harvest, a book about the dangers of industrially-produced food and the need for sustainability. In 1999, Ann was asked to be the Executive Chef and Dir. of Wellness & Nutrition at The Ross School on Long Island. There, she discovered a solution to the poor childhood nutrition she had been witnessing: a sustainable model for schools to transition to scratch-cook kitchens with a focus on fresh, nutrient-rich food. She founded F3 to share what she learned with schools everywhere.

About You

Organization:

Food Family Farming Foundation

About You

First Name

Chef Ann

Last Name

Cooper

Twitter URL

<https://twitter.com/chefannc>

Facebook URL

<https://www.facebook.com/chefannc?fref=ts>

About Your Organization

Organization Name

Food Family Farming Foundation

Organization Country

, CO, Boulder, Boulder County

Country where this project is creating social impact

, XX, National

Has the organization received awards or honors? Please tell us about them

Chef Ann Cooper, president and founder of Food Family Farming Foundation (F3), has received the following awards and honors for the work she has done through F3:

- 2012 IACP Humanitarian of the Year Award presented to Chef Ann.

- Named one of FoodService Director's inaugural "Influential 20" (2012).
- Selected as one of Greatist.com's top 15 Crusaders for Health in the Food Industry (2012).
- School Food Politics: The Complex Ecology of Hunger and Feeding Around the World, for which Chef Ann wrote the foreword, won the 2012 Critics Choice Book Award from the American Educational Studies Association.
- 2011 Women Chefs and Restaurateurs "Women Who Inspire" Award.
- The Susan B. Komen Foundation Special Inspirational Award from 2011 The Inspiration Awards for Women.
- 2009 National Resources Defense Council "Thought Leader" Growing Green Award.

Nutrients For All

Where do you ensure the availability of nutrients?

Human wellness and vitality.

If you had greater capacity, which additional sectors would you like your solution to target - either through expansion, partnership, or thought exchange?

Nutrient-rich farming.

How specifically would this added capacity help you improve the quality, efficiency, or sustainability of your existing product or service?

F3 currently provides schools with tools to incorporate local, nutrient-rich food into their nutrition programs, but the percent of local food in schools remains low. We need to help schools create major systemic change to make local food an integral part of their school food landscape.

Transitioning to a scratch-cook school kitchen that supports local food means big changes to a school's operations. Everything from their storage capacity and transportation resources to their kitchen equipment and procurement practices needs to change. THEN schools can help grow local food systems.

Source URL: https://www.changemakers.com/nutrientsforall/competition/entries/food-family-farming-foundation?breadcrumb_type=finalists